

Medical

FURTHER REPORT
(IN PART)
OF THE COMMITTEE,
ON THE
NAVAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE U. STATES,
ON THE SUBJECT OF
NAVY HOSPITALS.

JANUARY 4th, 1810.
Accompanying a Bill establishing Navy Hospitals.

WASHINGTON CITY:
PRINTED BY ROGER C. WEIGHTMAN.

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1810.

FURTHER REPORT

(2d PART)

OF THE COMMITTEE

ON THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

NAVY HOSPITALS

JANUARY 22, 1810

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

WASHINGTON CITY

PRINTED BY BAKER & LEITCH

1810

REPORT.

The Committee on the Naval Establishment, further report, in part,

THAT their attention had been called by the secretary, to navy hospitals; to his memoranda herewith presented, they beg to refer. It remains for your committee to state their conviction of the propriety of the secretary's suggestions, and to congratulate the House, that the opportunity is offered to ameliorate greatly the situation of a meritorious portion of citizens, without recurring to the public treasury. Of all classes of society, seamen require most the paternal foresight of government. Habit, which tyrannises over man in every situation, makes the sailor ever regardless of to-morrow. Like the infant, he requires a guardian, or old age brings with it miserable poverty. On this principle, our government, as well as others, have, from seamen's wages, raised a fund for marine hospitals, with guardian care, setting apart a portion of the earnings of health for a support in sickness and decrepitude. The object is to give this principle a more operative direction, and not to deviate from it in the slightest degree. The sailor alone shall be able to exult in the comfortable assylum prepared for his aged and enfeebled brother, whilst the farmer himself, pressed by the hard hand of poverty, may view with complacency the comfort of others, which cost not an additional stroke of his hoe or his axe. The committee recommend the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the 20 cents per month deducted by law from the pay of the officers and seamen

of the navy, together with such sums as may be due or become due to deserters, shall be made a fund for building and supporting navy hospitals, to be expended under the direction of the secretary of the navy and others, as commissioners of said fund.

Resolved, That all fines imposed on officers, seamen and marines shall accrue in aid of the hospital fund, and that one ration shall be allowed the hospital, for every person admitted, to be deducted from their accounts on settlement; and when any one shall be received into the hospital, who shall be entitled to a pension, such pension shall be paid to the hospital during his continuance therein.

Resolved, That the unexpended balance in the hands of the treasurer, of the 20 cents heretofore deducted from the pay of the officers and seamen of the navy, shall accrue to the navy hospital fund.

MEMORANDA.

NAVY DEPARTMENT.

FEBRUARY 22, 1810.

SIR,

AVAILING myself of the latitude allowed me by the honorable committee, of which you are the chairman, I submit for consideration, the following observations and notes, relative to pensions and hospitals.

First. As it respects the pensions of seamen and marines.

By the 8th section of the act for the better government of the navy, it is provided, that the pensions shall in no case exceed one half the monthly pay.

Vol. 5, p. 125,
sec. 8.
April 23,
1800.

The power of regulating the pay of seamen and marines is vested in the President of the United States; that of seamen has been regulated from time to time according to circumstances, depending principally on the wages given in the merchant service. Hence, in the years 1798, 1799, 1800 and 1801, their pay was 17 dollars per month; in the years 1802 and 1803, it was 14 dollars; afterwards 10 dollars, and is now 12 dollars per month. The pay of the marine was early fixed at 6 dollars per month, and has undergone no change.

Vol. 4, p. 15;
sec. 6.
July 1, 1797.
Vol. 4, p. 199,
sec. 2.
July 11, 1798.

Vol. 6, p. 24,
sec. 14.
March 6,
1802.

Striking inequality in the pensions of seamen of the same class, under existing laws.

Pension of soldier 5 dollars per month, marine 3 dollars per month.

Navy Pension Fund,
vol. 5, p. 126,
sec. 9.
April 23,
1800.

Soldiers in the land service may receive a pension of 5 dollars per month.

Hence it is obvious, that, under present laws, great inequality exists with respect to pensions; the same description of persons may at one time receive $8\frac{1}{2}$ dollars per month, at another 7 dollars, at another 6 dollars, at another 5 dollars, per month. The most valuable seaman, however crippled in the public service, could not now receive a pension exceeding six dollars per month; and in the year 1800 or 1801 an inferior seaman, sustaining less disability, might have received $8\frac{1}{2}$ dollars per month. Cases of this kind, indeed, are now to be found upon the pension roll. It appears too, that the pension provided for the marine is two fifths less than that provided for the soldier in the land service. This distinction between the marine and the soldier, is certainly not founded in any principle of justice; its existence, it is presumed, has escaped the attention of Congress, otherwise it would not have been suffered to remain so long to the prejudice of the marine.

A strong dissuasive to the continuance of this distinction arises out of the fact that the pension of the marine is paid out of a fund which his enterprise contributed to raise, whereas, to pay the pension of the soldier, Congress have to make annual appropriations of money out of the treasury.

To remove the existing pernicious inequality in the pensions of seamen of the

same class, and sustaining similar disabilities; and to place the marine on an equality, in this respect, with the soldier, the 8th section of the act of the 23d April, 1800, (see vol. 5, page 125,) ought to be repealed, so far as respects the pensions of seamen and marines; and it ought to be declared by law that the pension of the able seaman should not exceed dollars per month, that of the ordinary seaman or boy dollars, and that of a non-commissioned officer, musician or private in the marine corps, five dollars per month. Under such a law, the compensation for wounds sustained in the public service, might be graduated by the measure of disability incurred; and as the law ought to provide for the highest disability that may be sustained, it is conceived, that the blank for able seamen might be filled with 10 dollars, and that for ordinary seamen and boys with six dollars, without transcending the bounds of justice, or falling short of the dictates of humanity. Surely 10 dollars per month would not be an extravagant compensation to a poor crippled sailor, deprived of the use of his limbs in his country's service, and who, when not able to pursue his profession, is, emphatically, like a fish out of water, and is as utterly incapable of making any kind of provision for his support, as the disabled soldier, who had never seen salt water, would be on board of ship.

Regulations suggested, with respect to the pensions of seamen and marines.

Secondly. As it respects hospitals for the relief of sick and disabled seamen.

Vol. 4, p. 497,
sec. 2.
March 2,
1799.

As a fund for the relief of sick and disabled seamen, the secretary of the navy is required to deduct from the pay of each officer, seaman and marine, belonging to the navy, 20 cents per month, and to pay the same quarter annually into the treasury, to be applied under the direction of the President of the United States. The amount, thus deducted and paid into the treasury, is \$ 55,649 29, and there is a considerable sum deducted but not yet paid into the treasury; and yet no navy officer has, and but very few of the navy seamen have, received any benefit from it.

Navy hospitals should be distinct from those erected for the relief of seamen in the merchant service.

By law, the like deduction of 20 cents per month is made from the pay of each seaman in the merchant service, and the whole fund thus raised is applicable indiscriminately to the relief of officers, seamen and marines, of the navy, and the seamen of the country generally. The inconveniences and embarrassments, which arise from the placing of persons, engaged under military law in the public service, in hospitals, where no such law exists, have escaped the attention of Congress. In the few cases, which have occurred, of navy seamen being sent to such hospitals, experience has proved, that the commanding officers of the ships, from which they were sent, could never get returns made to them; and that, on an average, three

out of five have deserted, as soon as they got in a convalescent state. Hence the propriety of having distinct establishments for the relief of sick officers, seamen and marines of the navy. Let the fund drawn from the seamen in the merchant service be appropriated for the relief of seamen in that service; and let the fund deducted from the pay of the officers, &c. of the navy be appropriated exclusively for them.

If such a law existed, and the supplementary provisions hereafter suggested were authorised by law, there might be, in a very short time, six capacious hospitals established, in which all the sick, of every description, of the navy, might be comfortably nursed; all the wives of seamen killed in action might be supported; all the children supported and educated; and young men, just entering the service as midshipmen, might acquire the invaluable knowledge of the theory of navigation, lunar observations and naval tactics, without costing the public a single cent. If doubts should be entertained as to the capacity of the means to accomplish these important and highly interesting objects, they may easily be removed by actual demonstration.

Benefits that
would result
from the erec-
tion of navy
hospitals.

In addition to the 20 cents per month, let funds be raised from such of the following sources as may be thought most advisable, or to complete the goodly work at once, let the whole of them be added to the fund.

1. Let Congress declare by law that all the balances due to deserters from the service should be forfeited and thus applied.

Additional
funds sugges-
ted.

2. That the balances, due to seamen dying in the service, should be invested in funds, and the interest thus applied, until such balances should be called for by either the wives, children or known legal representatives of the deceased.

3. Let the disabled person, entitled to a pension, make his election between going into a hospital for life, or receiving the pension allowed him by law. If he preferred going into a hospital for life, which many would do, then his pension to be applied towards the support of the hospital.

4. Let the balance at this time, or the unapplied amount of the money raised by deducting 20 cents per month from the pay of the officers, &c. of the navy, be thus applied.

Vol. 4, p 497,
sec. 2.

5. Let Congress add to the 20 cents, which, by the act of 2d March, 1799, the secretary of the navy is required to deduct from the pay of the officers, seamen and marines of the navy—Instead of 20 cents, 50 cents might be deducted. This of itself would produce 150 per cent. upon the amount now deducted. The officers, seamen and marines, would, it is confidently believed, cheerfully consent to a deduction of one dollar per month from their pay, if they knew that the amount was to be applied exclusively to their benefit.

Additional
funds sug-
gested.

6. Let the rations of the seaman or marine, and one of the rations of each officer, while in hospital, be deducted and thus applied. See note A.

7. Let all mulcts of pay, by sentence of courts martial, and all stoppages of grog, for minor offences, be thus applied.

8. Let ten or fifteen per cent. on slop clothing, furnished the seamen, be thus applied. At this time the sailor on board ship, is furnished with slop clothing, from 25 to $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. less than he could get it at, out of a slop shop; so that if 10 per cent. on the present price were added, the seaman would still get the slop clothing from 15 to $23\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. less than he could buy it for, out of a slop shop. Hence he could not reasonably complain at the making of the proposed addition to the price, especially when he would reflect that the amount thus to be produced was intended exclusively for his benefit, and that of his brother seamen.

In addition to these provisions, it will be recollected, that many of the officers necessary for the hospitals might be selected from among those disabled in the service, who would gladly serve without any addition to their pensions, excepting merely their board, the cost of which to the establishment would be very inconsiderable. There are now on the roll of pensioners, one captain of the navy, one lieutenant, one surgeon, one surgeon's mate, and a number of boat-

Pensioners
might be of-
ficers of hos-
pitals.

swains, gunnèrs, sail-makers, sergeants of marines, cooks, &c.

Navy yards suitable places for hospitals ; and commandants might be governors ex officio, without any additional pay.

Further, it is presumed that in or near the navy yards, would be the most suitable places for the erection of hospitals. In that case, the commandants of the yards might be governors ex-officio of the hospitals, without any additional pay whatever. With them the secretary of the navy would hold his correspondence upon all subjects, in relation to the hospitals.

Wives and children of seamen killed in the service.

The wives of seamen killed in the service, would make nurses and attendants on the sick ; do all the necessary sewing, washing, &c. and their children might, with the pensioners and convalescents, work the gardens.

Qualifications of the immediate superintendents of hospitals.

The persons having the immediate charge of the hospitals, ought to be acquainted with navigation, &c. and have the qualifications of teachers ; so that the children of seamen killed in the service, might, when not at work in the gardens, be taught reading, writing and cyphering ; and young men just entering the service as midshipmen, might be sent to the hospitals to be taught navigation, &c.

Proposed deduction from the pay of midshipmen, in consideration of their being taught navigation, &c.

If deemed expedient, eight or ten dollars per month might be deducted from the pay of midshipmen, while studying navigation in the hospitals, and the amount might be applied towards paying the teacher, or if more than sufficient for that, towards defraying the general expenses of the hospitals. This indeed

would be learning them this valuable knowledge at less expense than they could possibly acquire it in any other way. To me it appears very clear, that the effects of such institutions, under proper regulations would be happy indeed.

—The wretched sailor, covered with wounds, received in the service of his country, might be saved the debasing employment of beggary. The woman widowed, the child orphaned, in the gallant achievements of the husband and father, might be rescued from wretchedness, probably disgrace: a body of men devoted, from gratitude, to the service of their country, would here be raised up; the benefits of education would be extended; a competition to be admitted into the public service would be excited; and the brave would be encouraged and stimulated; without costing the public one additional cent.

Respectfully submitted, by

PAUL HAMILTON.

*Honorable Burwell Bassett,
chairman of the naval com-
mittee of the House of Re-
presentatives.*

NOTE A.

The ration would of itself be sufficient to defray the expenses of every description of provisions, wines, liquors, &c. required for the sick in hospitals, under proper regulations. The experiment has been fairly tried in a small hospital at New York, under the care of Dr. Samuel R. Marshall, a surgeon in the navy of the United States. The following is the result of that experiment :

For three months, one ration per day, for each man sick in the hospital, at 20 cents, amounted to	\$ 628 20
The expense of every description of provisions, &c. including pot herbs, soap and candles, was	301 57 $\frac{1}{4}$
Leaving a balance in favor of hospi- tal, of	<u>326 62$\frac{3}{4}$</u>